



# Special Education

Scarsdale Union Free School District  
December 16, 2024



## **LEARNING**

**Collaborative,  
Future-Oriented  
Academic Culture**



## **LIVING**

**Educational  
Environments that  
Promote Wellbeing,  
Belonging, and  
Resilience**



## **LEADING**

**Commitment to  
Inquiry,  
Interdependence,  
& Innovation**

Assess our current Special Ed continuum of services to:

- identify priorities for enhancements and expansion;
- increase the range of students with access to the curriculum within the least restrictive environment;
- focus on transition services and opportunities for students with disabilities on non-traditional post-secondary tracks.

# Goals of Tonight's Presentation



1. Special education overview
2. Current numbers and historical trends
3. Assessing special education
4. Map out future work

# Special Education - Purpose

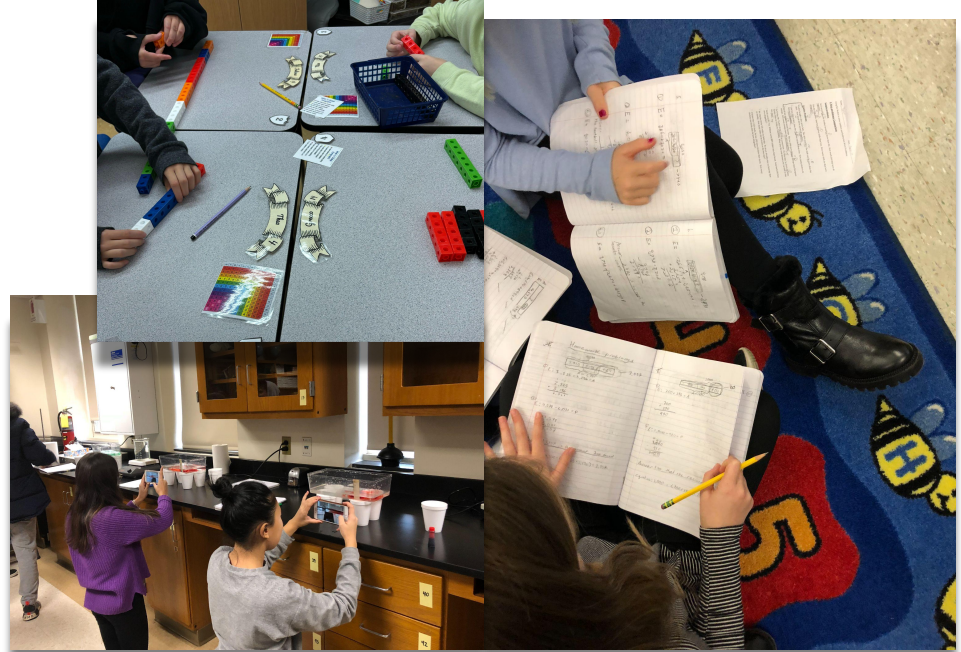


- To allow students with disabilities to access the general education curriculum with their non-disabled peers as much as is educationally appropriate
- To develop students' understanding of their own strengths and challenges while protecting and growing their self-worth
- To teach students self-advocacy skills and foster increasing independence throughout students educational careers
- To help students with disabilities develop post-secondary plans that consider their challenges but focus on maximizing their strengths and interests

# Special Education in the Broader Picture



- **A philosophy of belonging**
  - Celebrating diverse learners
  - Embracing all students
- **A focus on inclusive practices**
  - All students benefit
  - Builds educator capacity





# The Mandates

# What Are We Working Towards For Students?

## Caveat:

NYSED / Regents have implemented a plan to phase out Regents exams (effective for our current 4th grade students) and roll out a new profile of a graduate.

The details of the new graduation requirements are yet to be determined but the effort is to have more flexibility in content and assessment.

These changes will certainly affect the way we approach special education and exit requirements. However, the State's focus is the need for students to have good inquiry, collaboration, and thinking skills in addition to a comprehensive base of knowledge. These skills are fostered much more effectively in inclusive environments.

# The “Public” in Public School



**All students** have the right to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE)

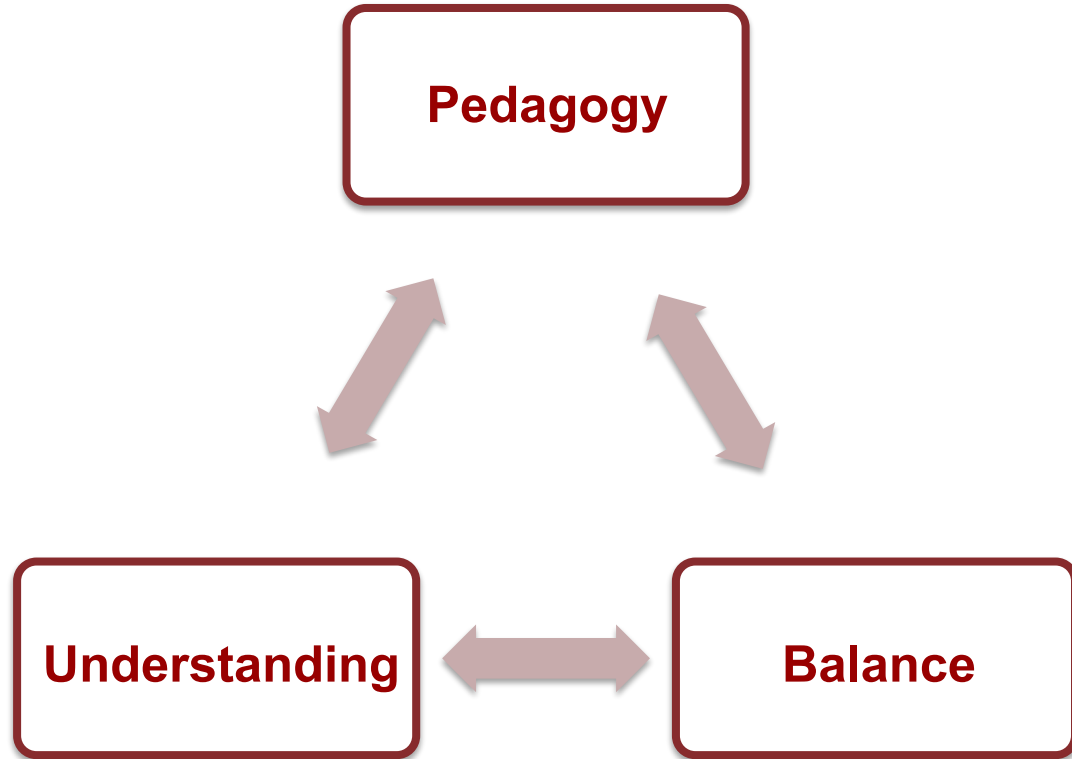
What does appropriate actually mean?  
It means providing for:

Individual Student  
Needs

Access to a  
Continuum



# Serving Student Needs





# Effective Pedagogy Includes:

- Professional development
- Targeted materials and programs based in research
- Universal design – collaboration with general education
- Teacher input, feedback, and support



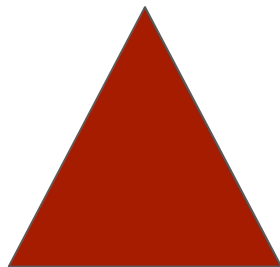
# Key Understandings

- **Students**
  - Academic needs
  - Social emotional needs
  - Health / related service needs
- **Parents**
  - Hopes, dreams, and fears
  - Knowledge about their own children
  - Challenges associated with helping fulfill their post-school expectations
- **Community**
  - Norms about behavior, outcomes, and levels of service
  - Level of acceptance for inclusive practices
  - Social norms – what are the social skills needed to gain inclusion among peers

## Balance

Inclusion  
Academic  
More  
General intervention

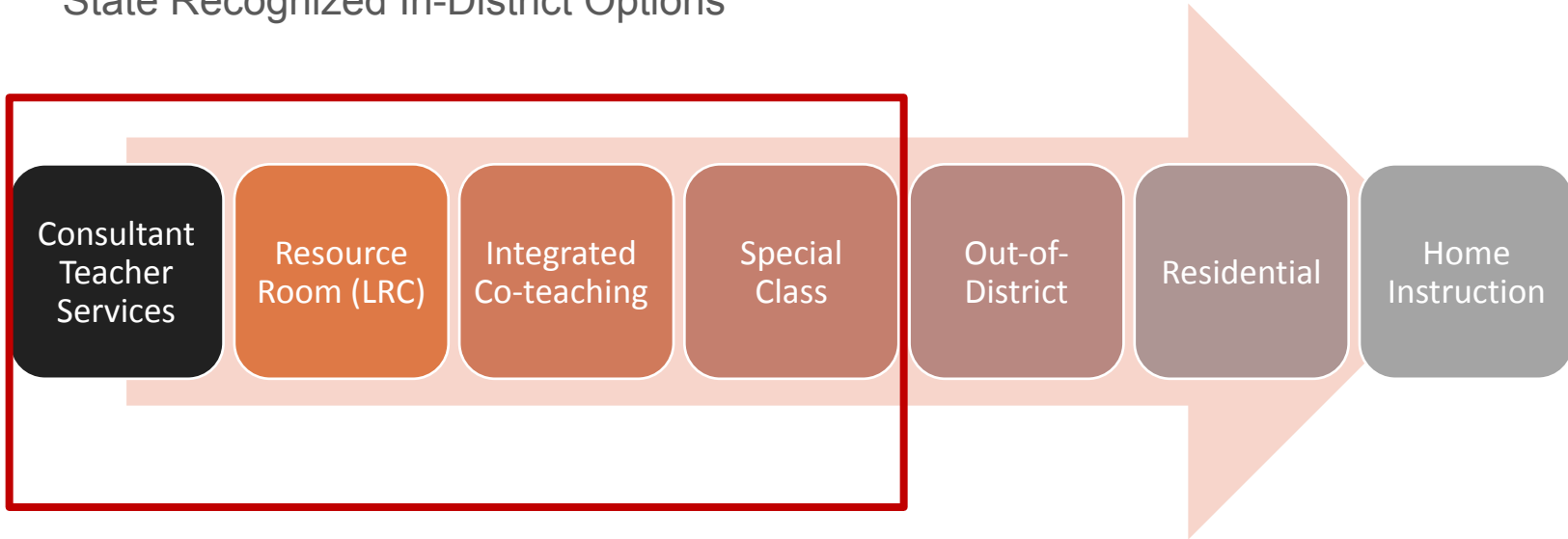
Direct Instruction  
Social Emotional  
Less  
Specific intervention



# CSE Continuum of Services



## State Recognized In-District Options



Districts must provide access to a variety of program structures to fulfill  
FAPE

# Current Special Education Programs



## Elementary:

### Learning Resource Center (LRC)

All Elementary Schools

### Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)

Fox Meadow: Grades: K, 2 (4 Sections)

Greenacres: Grades: 1, 3 (5 Sections)

Heathcote: Grades: 1, 5 (5 Sections)

Quaker Ridge Grades: K, 2, 4 (8 Sections)

### Self-Contained Classes

Edgewood:

Bridge Program (12:1:1, Gr. 3-5)

8:1:2 Intensive Support Program

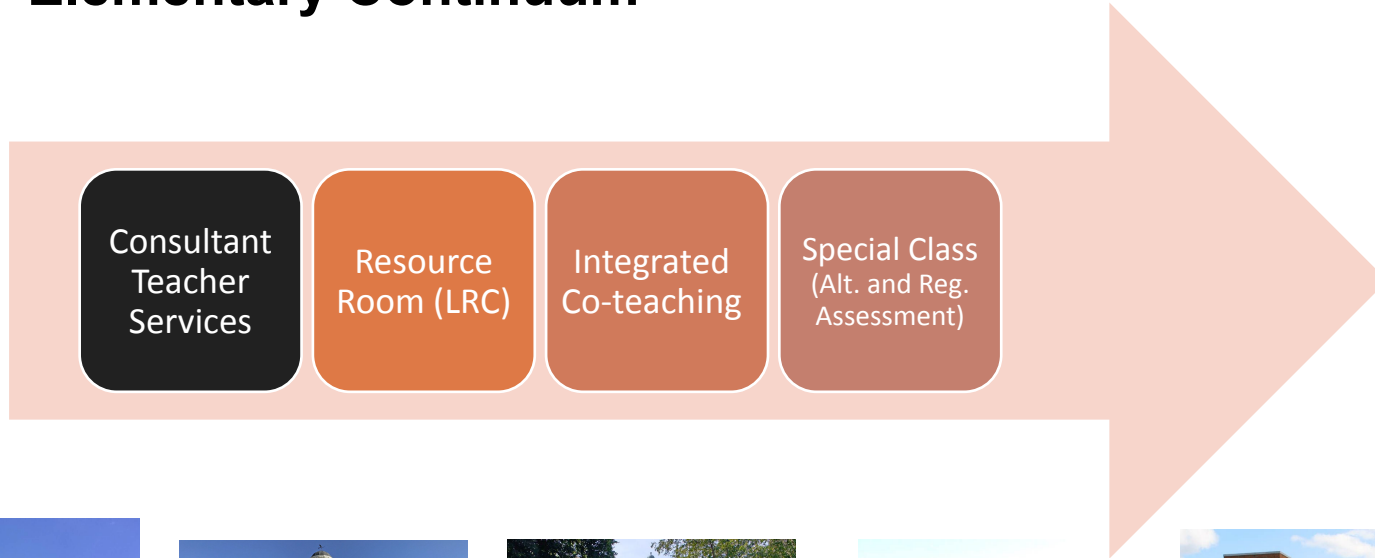
(2 sections, Gr. K-2 & Gr. 3-5)



# Current Special Education Programs



## Elementary Continuum



# Elementary Enrollments

| School       | Program | Enrollment by Grade    | Total |
|--------------|---------|------------------------|-------|
| Edgewood     | 8:1:2   | K-2:(7), 3-5:(3)       | 10    |
| Edgewood     | 12:1:2  | 3-5:(3)                | 3     |
| Fox Meadow   | ICT     | K:(13), 2:(16)         | 26    |
| Greenacres   | ICT     | 1:(13), 3:(23)         | 36    |
| Heathcote    | ICT     | 1:(21), 5:(22)         | 43    |
| Quaker Ridge | ICT     | K:(15), 2:(15), 4:(31) | 62    |



# Current Special Education Programs



## Scarsdale Middle School

Learning Resource Center  
Integrated Co-Teaching (6th-7th Grades)  
Special Class  
Parallel Program (8th Grade)  
Scarsdale Support Program

## Scarsdale High School

Supported Skills Program  
Learning Resource Center  
Scarsdale Support Program



# Current Special Education Programs

## Secondary Continuum



Consul.  
Teacher  
Services

Resource  
Room  
(LRC)

ICT

Special  
Class  
(Reg.  
Assess.)

*Enhanced ICT in 6th and 7th grades*

Consul.  
Teacher  
Services

Resource  
Room  
(LRC)

*Skills Classes serve as more directed support for some students and a regular assessment Special Class will be proposed this year*



# Special Education Trends

# Who Are We?



K-12

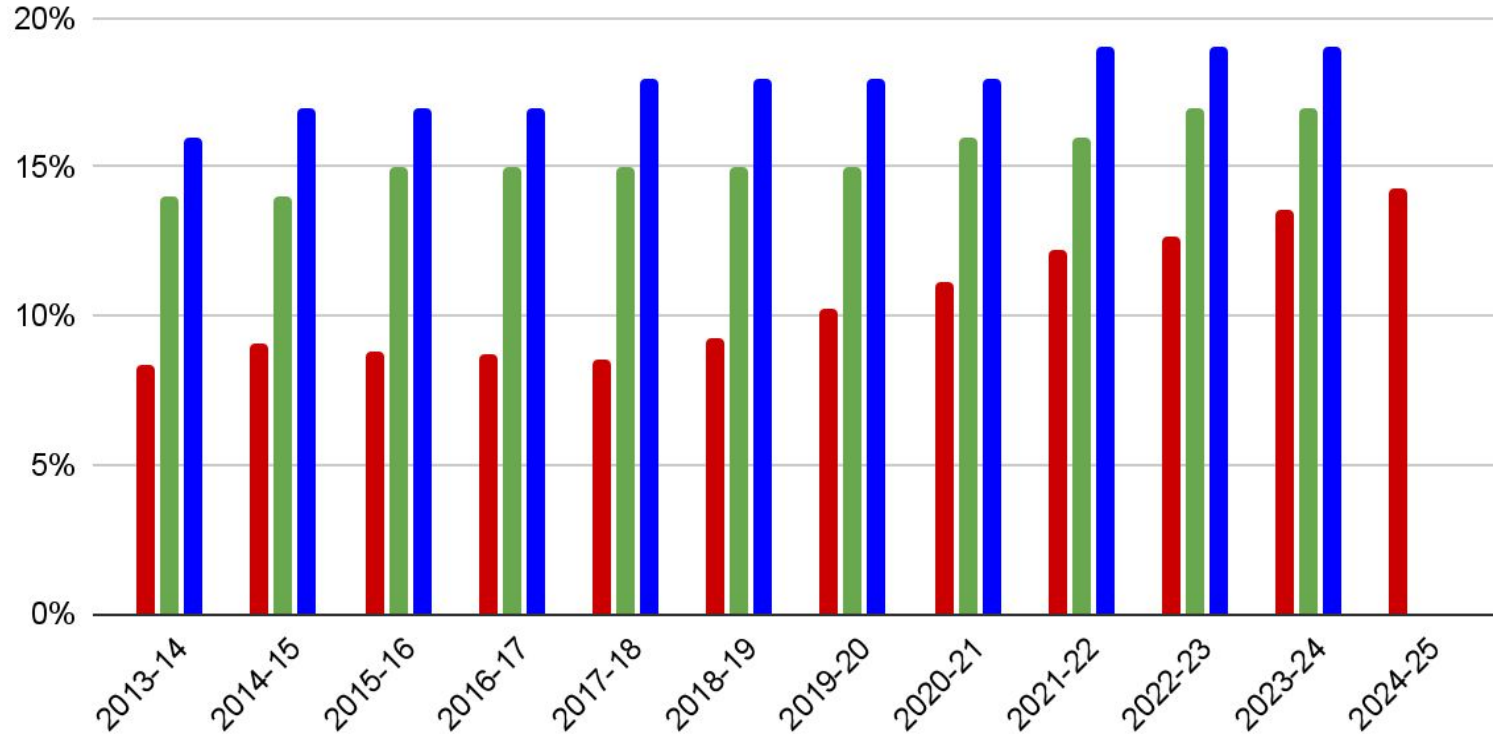
627 Students (14% of population)

Pre-School

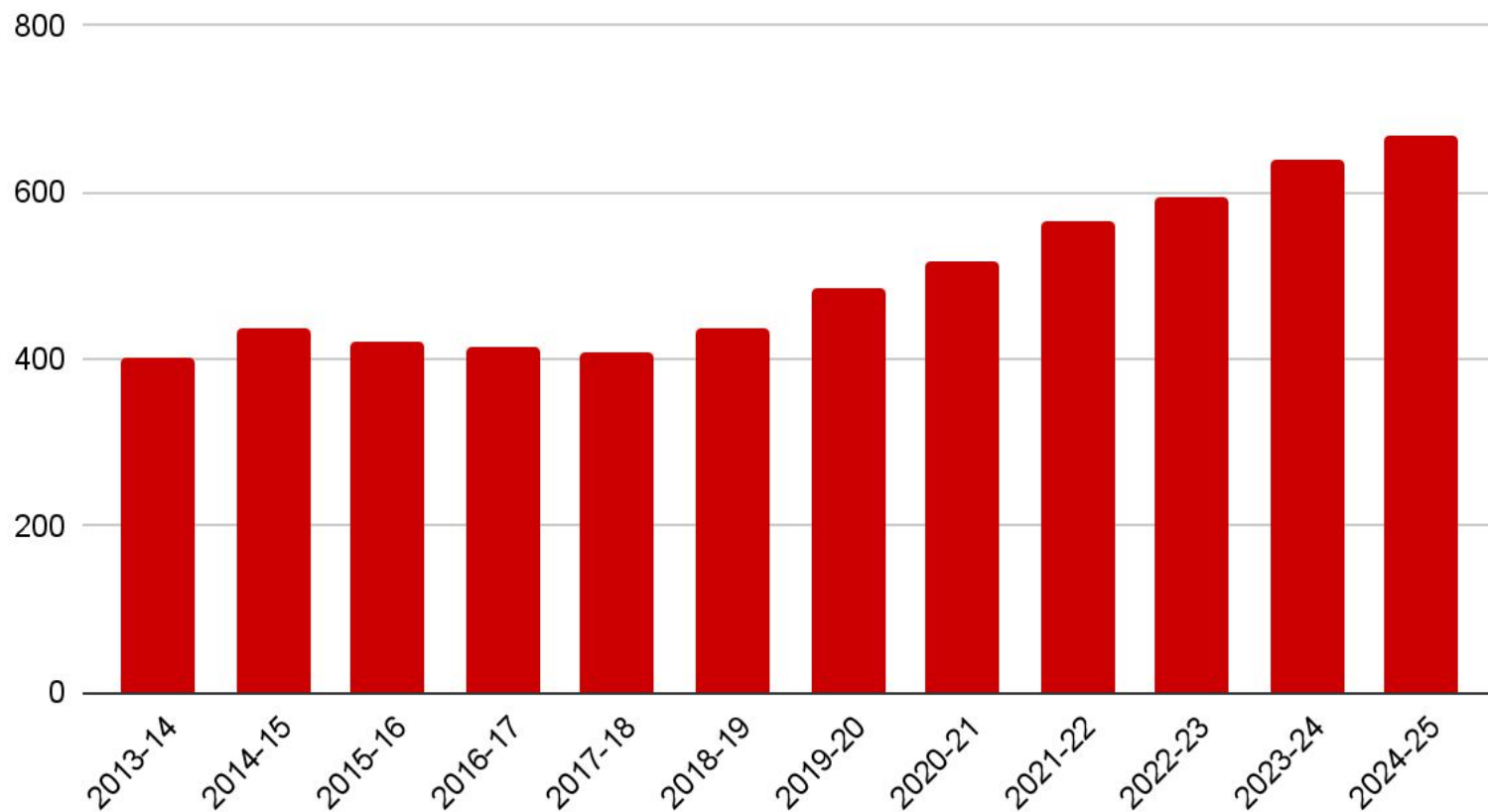
81 Students as of October 2024  
(82 October 2023)

## Percentage Classified

■ Scarsdale Classification Rate   ■ Westchester Classification Rate   ■ NYS Classification Rate

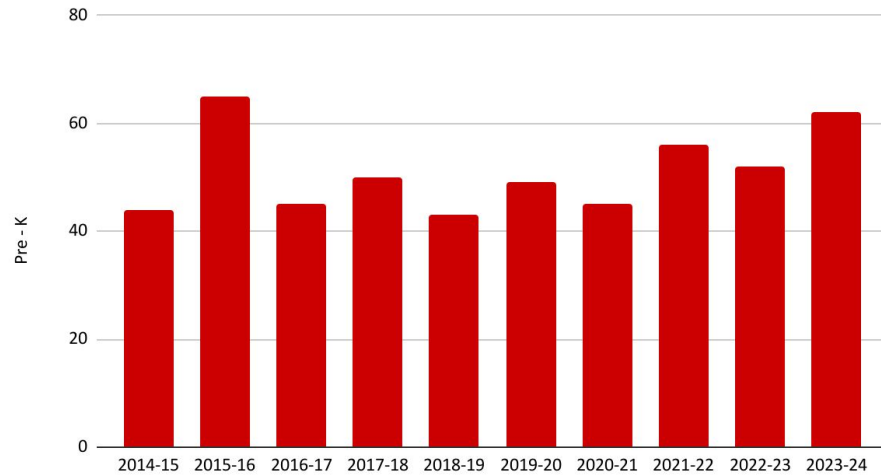


## Classified Students vs. Year

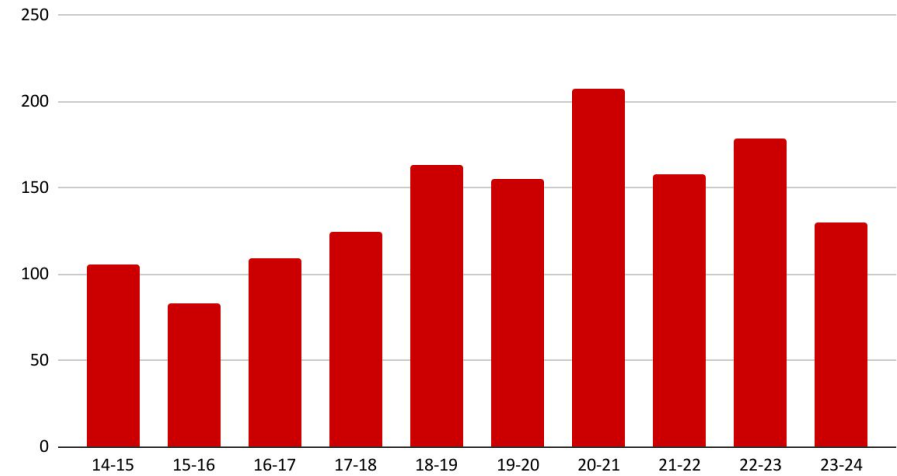




Pre-K Initials per Year



Initial Referrals vs. Year

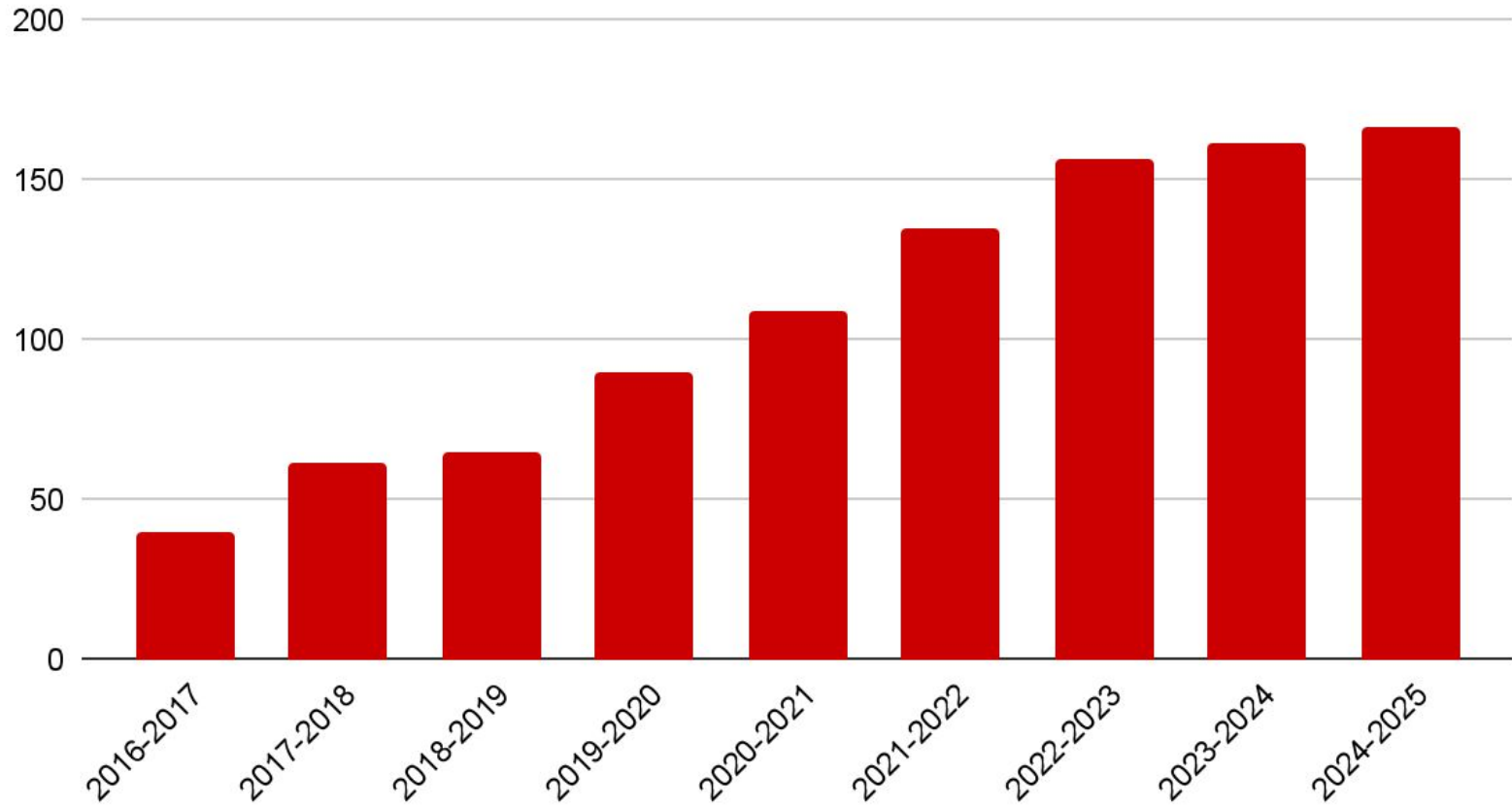




| Disability              | 2024-25    | 2023-24    | 2022-23    | 2021-22    | 2020-21    | 2019-20    | 2018-19    | 2017-18    | 2016-17    | 2015-16    | 2014-15    | Delta (10 years) |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| Autism                  | 80         | 77         | 69         | 64         | 49         | 43         | 39         | 31         | 30         | 26         | 22         | 58               |
| Emotional Disability    | 25         | 29         | 38         | 34         | 37         | 36         | 30         | 31         | 34         | 33         | 36         | -11              |
| Learning Disability     | 130        | 133        | 122        | 135        | 145        | 149        | 141        | 133        | 146        | 161        | 169        | -39              |
| Intellectual Disability | 0          | 1          | 1          | 1          | 1          | 1          | 0          | 2          | 2          | 2          | 2          | -2               |
| Deafness                | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0                |
| Hearing Impaired        | 5          | 4          | 3          | 3          | 3          | 2          | 3          | 1          | 1          | 2          | 1          | 4                |
| Speech and Language     | 85         | 78         | 72         | 77         | 68         | 56         | 54         | 59         | 55         | 61         | 76         | 9                |
| Visual Impairment       | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 1          | 0                |
| Orthopedic Impairment   | 1          | 1          | 2          | 4          | 6          | 7          | 6          | 4          | 4          | 3          | 4          | -3               |
| Other Health Impairment | 338        | 314        | 281        | 241        | 200        | 182        | 154        | 139        | 133        | 121        | 117        | 221              |
| Multiple Disabilities   | 2          | 2          | 5          | 5          | 6          | 8          | 8          | 8          | 10         | 10         | 9          | -7               |
| Deaf-Blindness          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0                |
| Traumatic Brain Injury  | 2          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 1          | 1          | 1          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 2                |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>669</b> | <b>639</b> | <b>593</b> | <b>564</b> | <b>516</b> | <b>485</b> | <b>436</b> | <b>409</b> | <b>416</b> | <b>420</b> | <b>437</b> |                  |
|                         |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |                  |
| Disability              | 2024-25    | 2023-24    | 2022-23    | 2021-22    | 2020-21    | 2019-20    | 2018-19    | 2017-18    | 2016-17    | 2015-16    | 2014-15    | Delta (10 years) |
| Autism                  | 12.5%      | 12.1%      | 11.6%      | 11.3%      | 9.5%       | 8.9%       | 8.9%       | 7.6%       | 7.2%       | 6.2%       | 5.0%       | 7.5%             |
| Emotional Disability    | 3.9%       | 4.5%       | 6.4%       | 6.0%       | 7.2%       | 7.4%       | 6.9%       | 7.6%       | 8.2%       | 7.9%       | 8.2%       | -4.3%            |
| Learning Disability     | 20.3%      | 20.8%      | 20.6%      | 23.9%      | 28.1%      | 30.7%      | 32.3%      | 32.5%      | 35.1%      | 38.3%      | 38.7%      | -18.3%           |
| Intellectual Disability | 0.0%       | 0.2%       | 0.2%       | 0.2%       | 0.2%       | 0.2%       | 0.0%       | 0.5%       | 0.5%       | 0.5%       | 0.5%       | -0.5%            |
| Deafness                | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%             |
| Hearing Impaired        | 0.8%       | 0.6%       | 0.5%       | 0.5%       | 0.6%       | 0.4%       | 0.7%       | 0.2%       | 0.2%       | 0.5%       | 0.2%       | 0.6%             |
| Speech and Language     | 13.3%      | 12.2%      | 12.1%      | 13.7%      | 13.2%      | 11.5%      | 12.4%      | 14.4%      | 13.2%      | 14.5%      | 17.4%      | -4.1%            |
| Visual Impairment       | 0.2%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.2%       | 0.2%       | -0.1%            |
| Orthopedic Impairment   | 0.2%       | 0.2%       | 0.3%       | 0.7%       | 1.2%       | 1.4%       | 1.4%       | 1.0%       | 1.0%       | 0.7%       | 0.9%       | -0.8%            |
| Other Health Impairment | 52.9%      | 49.1%      | 47.4%      | 42.7%      | 38.8%      | 37.5%      | 35.3%      | 34.0%      | 32.0%      | 28.8%      | 26.8%      | 26.1%            |
| Multiple Disabilities   | 0.3%       | 0.3%       | 0.8%       | 0.9%       | 1.2%       | 1.6%       | 1.8%       | 2.0%       | 2.4%       | 2.4%       | 2.1%       | -1.7%            |
| Deaf-Blindness          | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%             |
| Traumatic Brain Injury  | 0.3%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.2%       | 0.2%       | 0.2%       | 0.2%       | 0.2%       | 0.0%       | 0.0%       | 0.3%             |

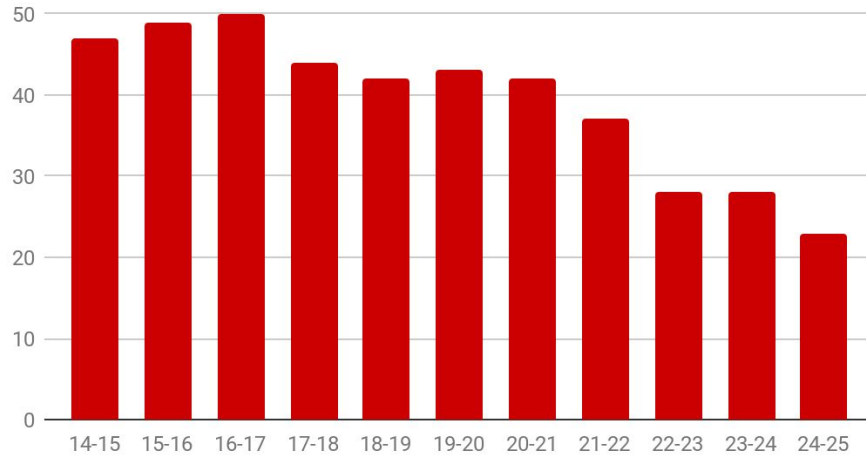


## # ICT Students vs. Year

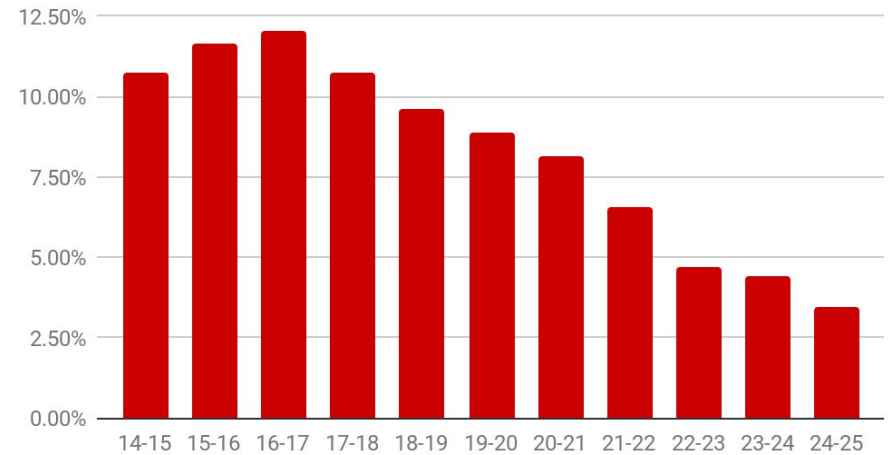


## Special Education students recommended for outside placements: 3.44% (23 students)

Students in CSE Directed Out of District Placements



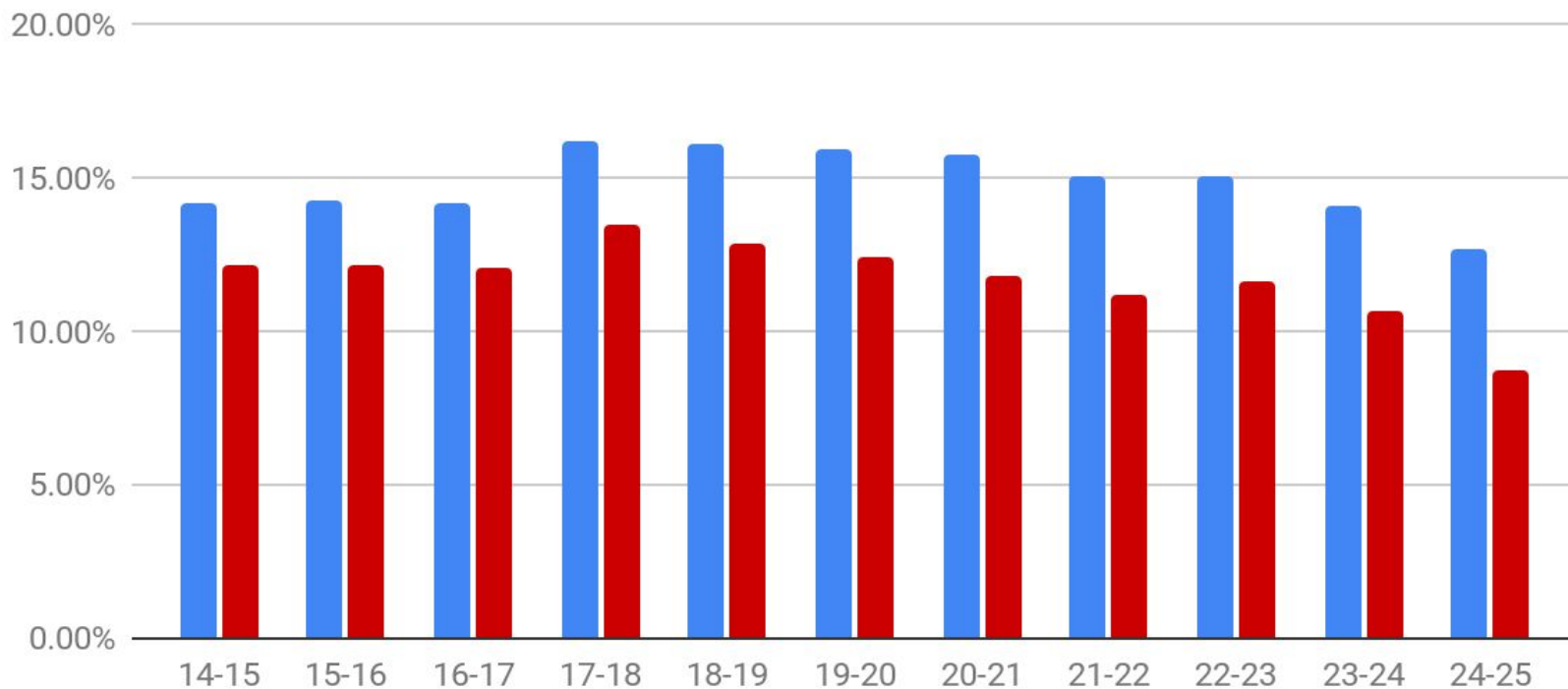
Percent of Students in CSE Directed Out of District



# Parentally Placed Special Education Students

■ Percentage of special education students parentally placed

■ Percentage in special education private schools



# Recent Hiring (2013-14 to present)



- Total increase in special education students since 2013-14: **+267**
- ICT sections: **6 (2014-15) 23 (2023-24) +17 FTE**
- Special Class sections (elementary): **0 (2014-15) 3 (2023-24) + 3 FTE**
- Social emotional program- SHS (2016-17); SMS (2022-23): **+ 4 FTE**
- LRC/ICT sections at SHS and SMS: **+ 3 FTE**
- District-wide psychologist (testing and ACT/SAT): **+ 1 FTE**
- District-wide behaviorist: **+ 1 FTE**
- Assistant Director of Special Education: **+ 1 FTE**

# Takeaways



- Enrollment: **+ 267 students** in the last 10 years
- Significant **rise in students with social and emotional disabilities** (ED and OHI classifications)
- ~ **+250%** increase in students with **Autism**
- Staffing (since 2013-14): **30 FTE (Approx. +\$3.4M)**
- Out of District Placements:
  - **Reduction from 50 to 23 (Approx. -\$2.2M, \$85K per student)**
  - Vast majority of students educated within their community



# Assessment

# Supervisory Personnel Special Education



## **District Administration:**

Assistant Superintendent - Eric Rauschenbach

**Asst. Director Special Education - Amy Cermele**

## **District Faculty:**

CSE Chairperson - Kristina Beck

CSE Chairperson/Psychologist - Dina Dadabo

CSE/CPSE Chairperson - Alexandra Hughes

District Psychologist - Micole Horowitz

District K-8 Behaviorist - Shana Glikson

## **District Support Staff:**

Assistant to the Asst. Supt. – Lori Ricciardi

Secretary to School District – Renee Franco

Office Clerk (10 months)- Nora Shwide-LeMorin

## **Building Level Supervision:**

SHS Dept. Chairperson Sp. Ed. – Eileen Cagner

SMS Dept. Chairperson Sp. Ed. – Jean Marie Guido

Elementary School Psychologists

## **2024-25 Budget:**

**Added Assistant Director (net +1)**

# Assessing Organizational Change



## CSE Process:

- ❑ Increased Capacity
- ❑ Student Observations; School Teams
- ❑ Process Alignment
- ❑ Progress Monitoring
- ❑ Professional Development



# Assessing Organizational Change



## Programmatic Supervision:

- ❑ Aligning and exploring pedagogy
- ❑ Program development
- ❑ Collaboration

# Assessing Success



## **Success for Individual Students AND Successful Programs**



# Assessing Individual Student Success

# Identifying Needs



## Evaluation:

- Yearly evaluation
  - Class performance
  - State/District common assessments
  - Progress monitoring of goals (for already classified students)
  - Teacher feedback and parent concerns
  
- Comprehensive evaluations
  - For all referrals and on a 3 year cycle thereafter
  - Psychological, educational, and related services

# Developing Goals



- ❑ Meet students where they are and make ambitious but realistic plans for progress over the year
- ❑ Goals are developed to **support students' identified needs**
- ❑ Goals are **based on progress towards identified curricular standards**

# Elementary Goals (examples)



Grade 1/2: Within one year, when given a sentence prompts, and a graphic organizer, student will choose a writing topic and generate two sentences on that topic, before seeking adult or peer support.

Grade 3/4: Within one year, student will write a 5 sentence paragraph on a given topic that includes a: topic sentence, 3 supporting details, and a concluding sentence.

Grade 5: Within one year, Student will write (5) on-topic paragraphs related to the writing genre currently being studied, that includes an introduction, 3 body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

# Middle and High School Goals (examples)



Middle School: When given a writing assignment, the student will include 2 supporting details/ pieces of textual evidence to expand on ideas and fully explain his/her/their thinking.

High School: The student will independently create topic sentences that directly support the thesis statement and main idea of each paragraph.

# Progress Monitoring



Special Education Teachers utilize a variety of methods to determine if students are making progress.

Some examples include:

- Classroom work samples (Portfolios)
- Exams (when directly related to goals)
- Recorded observations of students completing a task
- Interviews focusing on desired student advocacy skills
- Exit Tickets/Do Nows



# Collaboration with Families



- IEPs are living documents, the school or parents can call for a program review at anytime during the year to discuss progress or adjust recommendations
- Trimester (Elementary) or quarterly (secondary) updates
- Annual (at minimum) review with the CSE team to assess progress and develop new goals

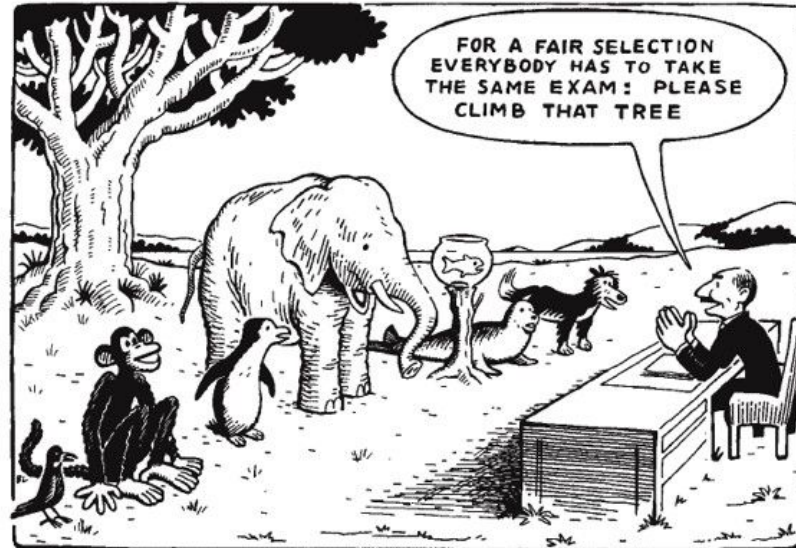


# Assessing Programmatic Success

# Aggregated Performance Data

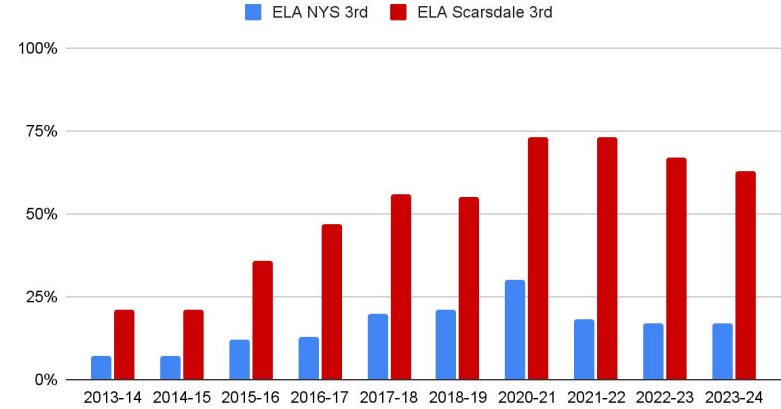
## Relative Performance and Progress toward State Standards

- ❑ Nature of Disabilities
- ❑ Cohorts
- ❑ Context

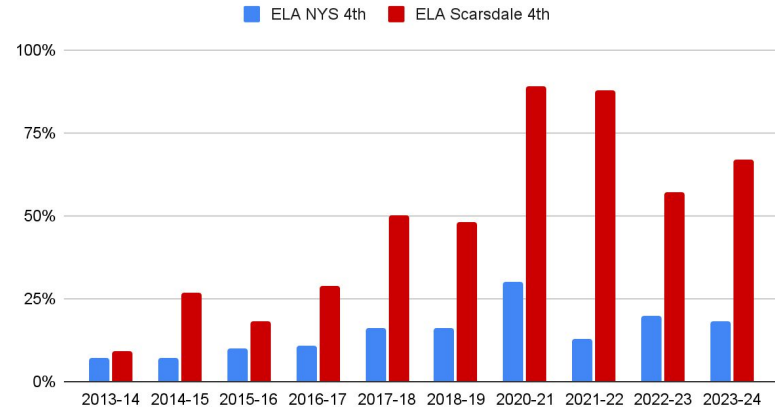


# Elementary 3-5 ELA State Assessments

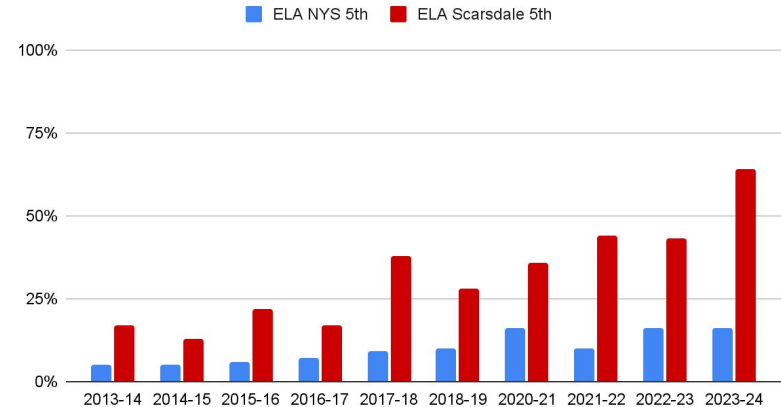
## 3rd Grade ELA



## 4th Grade ELA

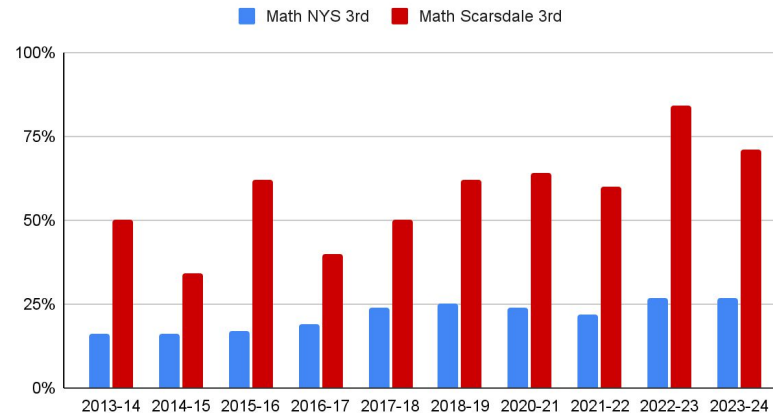


## 5th Grade ELA

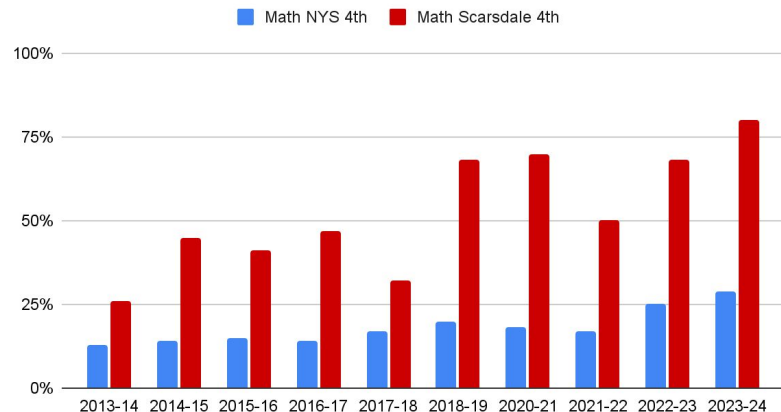


# Elementary 3-5 Math State Math Assessments

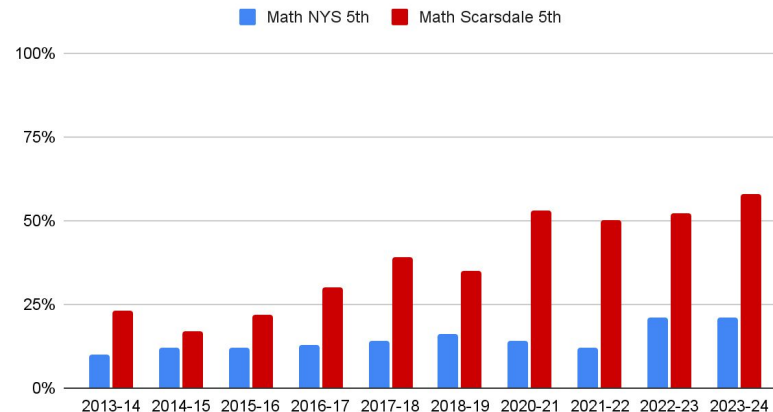
## 3rd Grade Math



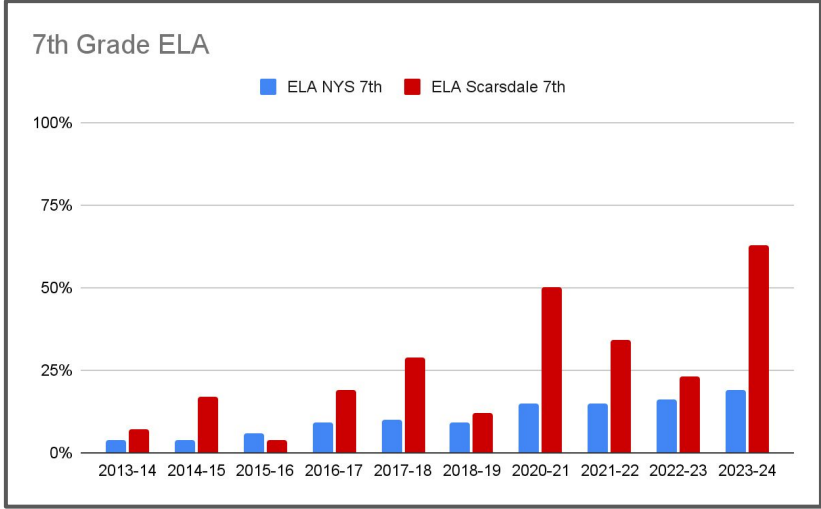
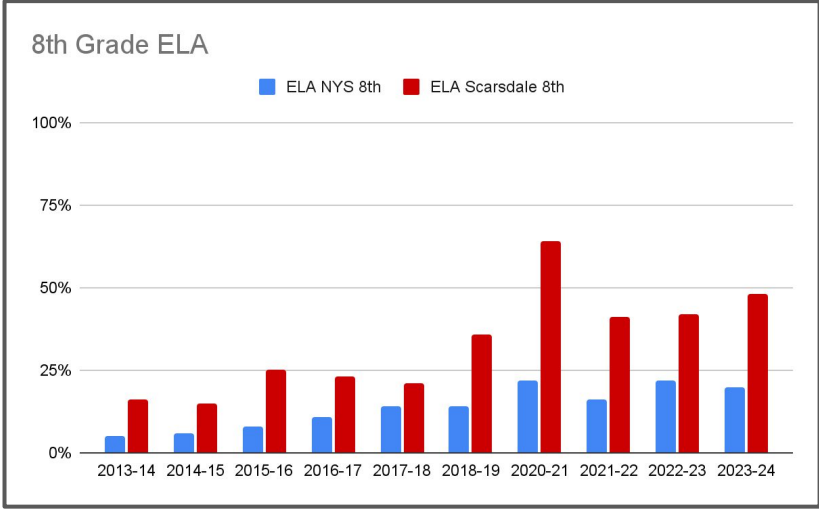
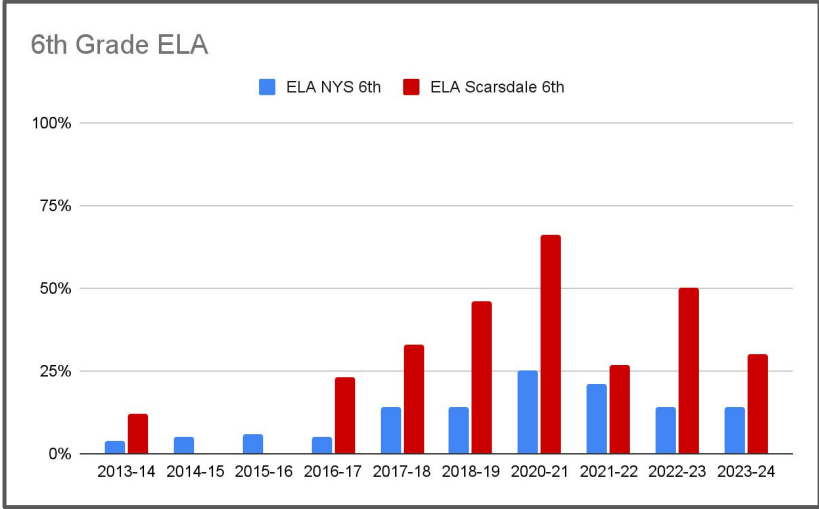
## 4th Grade Math



## 5th Grade Math

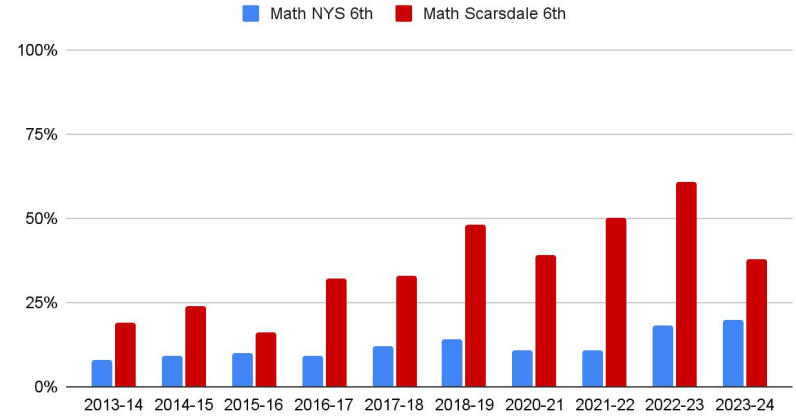


# Middle School 6-8 ELA State Assessments

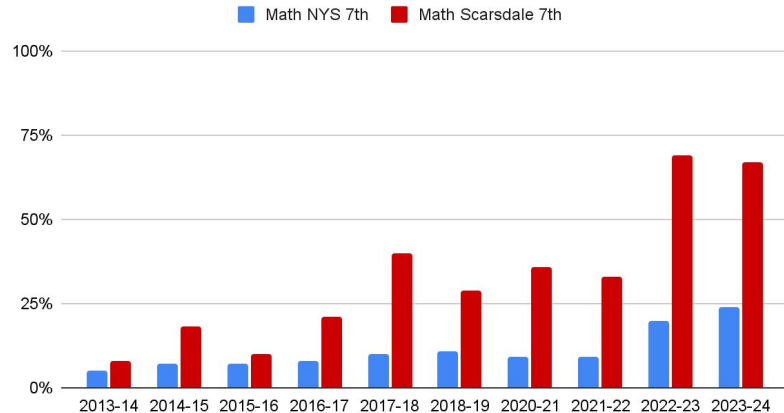


# Middle School 6-8 Math State Assessments

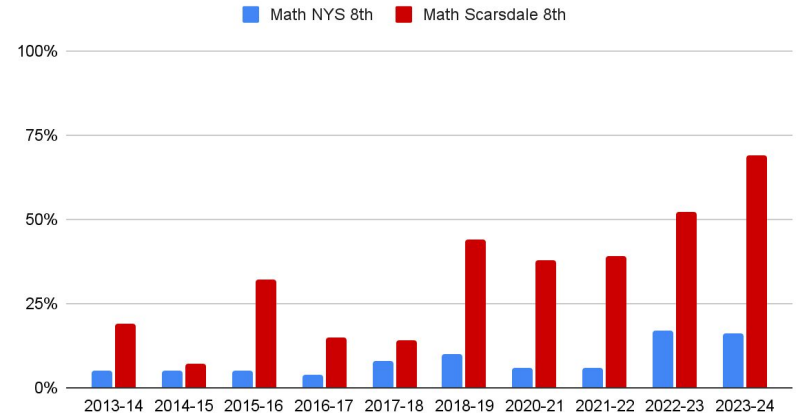
## 6th Grade Math



## 7th Grade Math

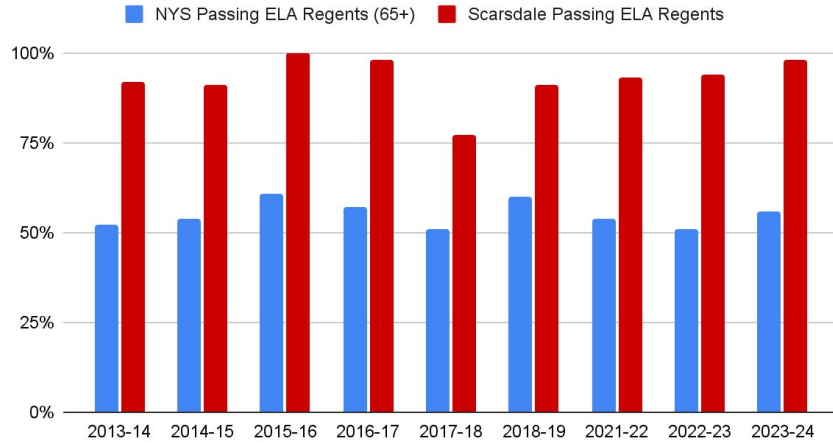


## 8th Grade Math

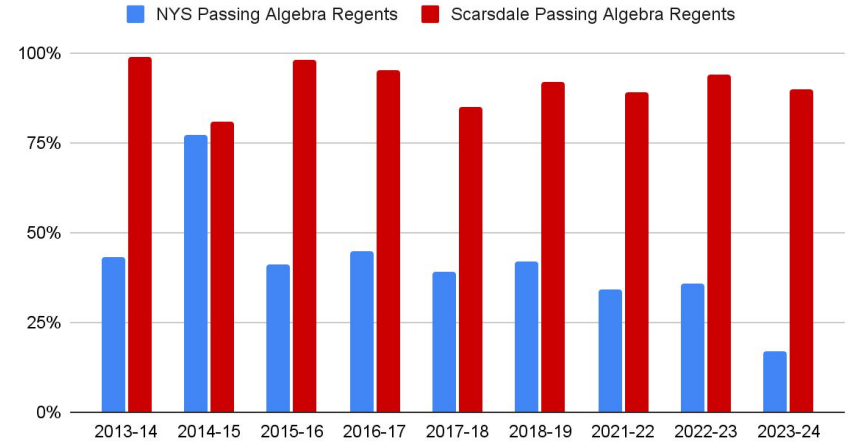


# ELA and Algebra I Regents Passing Rates

## ELA Regents Passing Rates

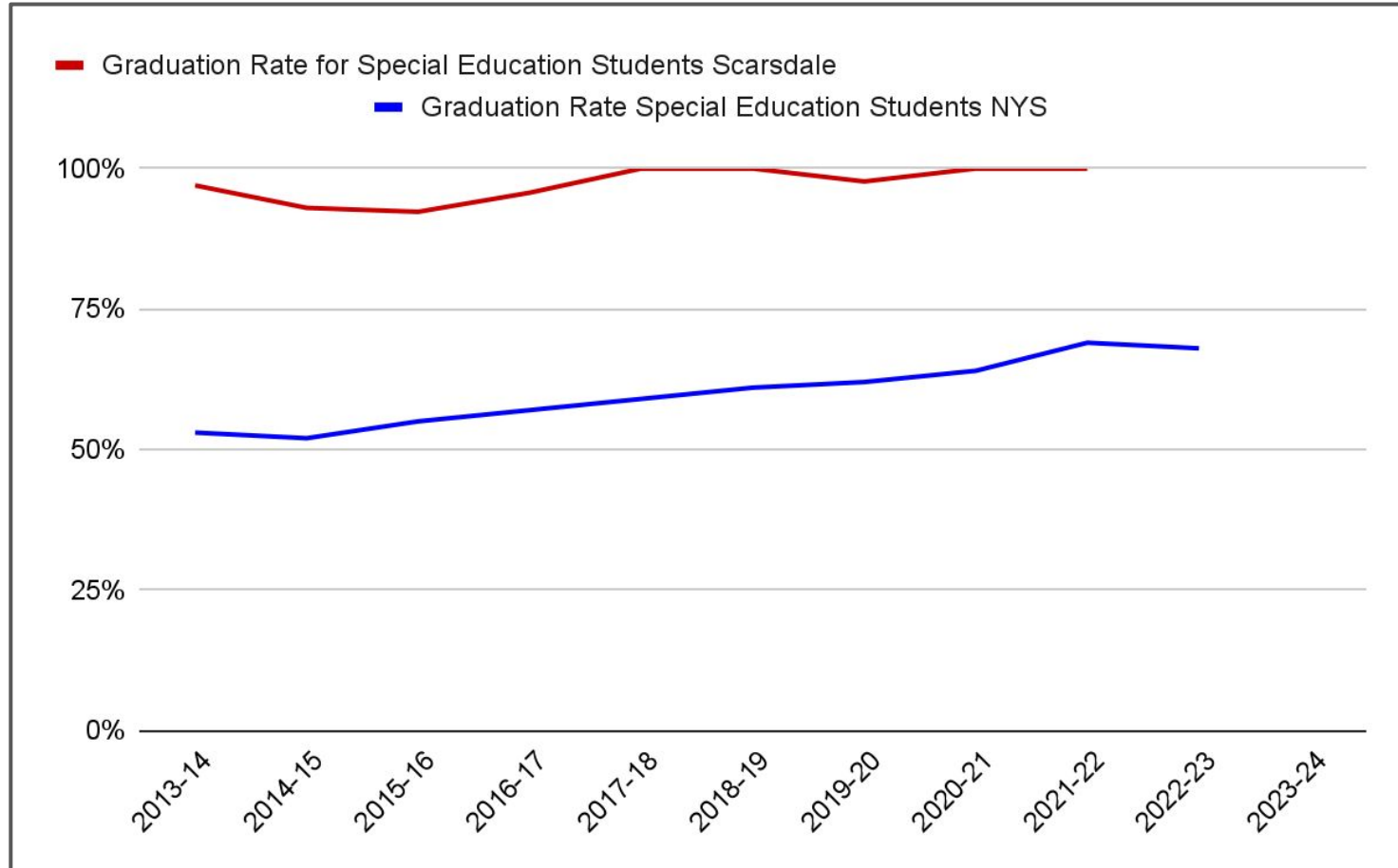


## Algebra Regents Passing Rates





# Graduation Rates





# Student, Family, and Staff Feedback

## **Students:**

- Teacher inquiry

## **Families:**

- Opportunities to provide feedback throughout the year
  - Coffees
  - Annual Reviews
  - Team Meetings

## **Staff:**

- Regular department and team meetings allow for consistent feedback on programs, professional development needs, and feasibility.



# Guiding Principles



**LEARNING**



**LIVING**



**LEADING**

- Scarsdale Strategic Plan
- High quality programming and interventions
- Supporting teachers and supporting families
- Sustainable program development focused on inclusion

# Next Steps



## Elementary:

- Continued professional development for LRC, ICT, and Special Classes
- Monitoring of social emotional disabilities and the need for additional related or educational programming
- Continued MTSS development to expand universal interventions and pre-referral services



# Next Steps



## Middle School:

- Expansion of continuum through ICT and special class
  - Expansion of 8:1:2 program (2025-26)
  - ICT offerings in all 4 major academic areas (2025-26)
- Professional development in alternate assessment curriculum, verbal communication based classes, and ICT
- MTSS development to expand universal interventions and pre-referral services



# Next Steps



## High School:

- Expansion of continuum
  - 12:1 special class regular assessment (2025-26)
  - Introduce ICT in “2” level core academic classes (2026 -27)
  - 8:1:2 special class alternate assessment (2028-29)
- Professional development in alternate assessment curriculum, verbal communication based classes, and ICT



# Estimated Staffing Needs



|                | Elementary |   | Middle School         | High School           |                  |                                      |
|----------------|------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Year           | ICT        | Special Class   | ICT & Special Class   | ICT & Special Class   | Leadership       | Total                                |
| <b>2024-25</b> | 1          | 0   | 1                     | 0                     | 1                | 3 FTE                                |
|                |            |   |                       |                       |                  |                                      |
| <b>2025-26</b> | 0-1        | Possible addition of a K-2 Bridge class sometime in this timeframe (only if an offset exists with external placement) | 1-2                   | 1 (12:1)              |                  | 2 to 4 new FTE                       |
| <b>2026-27</b> | 0          |   | 1                     | 1 (ICT)               |                  | 1-2 new FTE                          |
| <b>2027-28</b> | 0-1        |   | 0-1                   | 0-1 (ICT)             |                  | 1 to 3 new FTE                       |
| <b>2028-29</b> | 0-1        |   | 0                     | 1 (8:1:2)             |                  | 1 to 2 new FTE                       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>0-3</b> |   | <b>3 to 4 new FTE</b> | <b>3 to 4 new FTE</b> | <b>0 new FTE</b> | <b>5 to 11 new FTE</b> <sup>56</sup> |



# Takeaways

- Special classes will require additional programming over the next 4-5 years
- Advancing students require additional expansion of ICT in SMS/SHS
- Not expanding special class continuum will require increased tuition expenditure outstripping the FTE cost for those programs
- Expanding out-of-district acceptances for our special class and emotional programs could offset additional staffing costs





# Special Education

Scarsdale Union Free School District